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Ark of Ishmael

MARKAB

492 713 Akin to the *dhalla* and *maksar*, but of far greater interest, is the *markab* of the 'Anizah tribe, more especially of the Ruwala. It consists of a light wooden frame and is covered with the feathers of the *na'am* or Arabian ostrich.

The *markab* is known as the Ark of Ishmael, in honour of the first Arab nomad, and when the 'Anizah go into battle, a maiden (daughter of the shaikh) rides in it and moves forward in the centre of the force to spur the warriors on to deeds of valour.

When the battle is joined the camel bearing the *markab* is said to be hobbled with a chain so that it cannot retreat from the scene or flee.

Should the battle go against the Ruwala, retirement is only allowed as far as the *markab*—there everyone must rally and fight, if necessary, to the last, in defence of the *markab* and the lady seated in it. The *markab* of the Ruwala has undoubtedly a pre-Islamic origin.

The Shaikh of Kuwait told me on the 10th January, 1935, that a similar *markab* was last used by Bin Sa'ud at the battle of Jarāb in the spring of 1915. Also that a *markab* was used by Shaikh Mubarak of Kuwait a few years before he died when Bin Rashid threatened to attack Jahrah; one of the fairest of the Al Subah* ladies was put in it with hair flowing, head uncovered and face unveiled. Had not Bin Rashid withdrawn, the Subah would have rallied round their *markab* to a man.

There can be little doubt, however, that both Bin Sa'ud's *markab* and that of Mubarak al Subah were merely glorified and richly decorated tribal litters, and should be more properly called *maksars*. The Ruwala are the only tribe I know of who use the true *markab* as a tribal fetish or banner. Carl Raswan, in his book *Black Tents of Arabia*, gives some excellent photographs of the Ruwala *markab*.

Shaikh Khalid al Hithlain of the 'Ajman told me on the 5th December, 1934, that the 'Ajman tribe still use the *markab* when going to war, but call it by the ordinary name of the women's camel litter, *maksar*. Like the Ruwala, however, they put up their fairest maiden unveiled and with hair flowing to encourage the warriors to extra bravery, and to shame the laggards into pushing forward to the forefront of battle.†

* Mauziera bint 'Ali, wife and first cousin of Shaikh Mubarak.

† My wife and I visited Ibn Shadan of the Ruwala in 1945, and were shown the famous Markab.

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177 sea coast towns and in those countries still using *arabdaz* or horse-
231 drawn carriages. The market for horses is I fear going to get much worse as motor transport develops in the Middle East. The demand for horses is already so restricted that the Badawin of the interior has now started the miserable practice of killing off his male foals at birth. I am told (1935) by various shaikhs of the interior that this practice has become almost universal. It no longer pays the average Badawin to keep a horse till it reaches three or four years of age, for if he is lucky enough to find a buyer then he will only get Rs.80 to Rs.90 for his animal. As I write in 1935 a second-class (average) Arab horse in the bazaars of Kuwait fetches only about Rs.40 (about £3). Fortunately, Arab horse-racing still flourishes in places like Bombay, Poona, Baghdad and Cairo, and this will for some years to come insure a steady market for the best class of Arab horses. This, however, will only preserve to the world a small percentage of the best animals, and will not save the second-class or average horse.

231 Apart from the woeful killing of males at birth, I had it on the
704 authority of His Majesty King Bin Sa'ud himself in 1932, that Arab
• 713 mares are also on the high road to extinction since the introduction of the small-bore magazine rifle as a war weapon among the tribes of inner Arabia. As he pithily put it, "In the olden days when tribe fought tribe with spear and sword, the mares, which were always ridden in battle, came to little harm, for man sought to kill his opponent man, not his steed. To-day the fighter, whilst still a thousand yards from his enemy, is greeted with a rain of well-aimed bullets which slays infinitely more animals than riders."

231 Bin Sa'ud also told me that he was fully alive to the danger of the Arab horse becoming extinct, and in order to remedy matters had started five stud farms in Sa'udi Arabia all under his royal patronage. He added that he meant to try hard to better the situation, but was not optimistic.

In 1935, as I write, it is most pleasing to see that the King is still pressing on with this good work, and any one going to Riyadh from Iraq and taking with him one or more good mares, is given a special welcome and receives a good price for his animals. More important still is the help the King affords to his own tribesmen, who happen to have fallen on bad times and cannot afford even to keep their mares

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Add to the above the Zubairiyah, a Zubair sheep tribe, and the Zaabe and Rufai'at, who are of Shammar origin, both of whom in good years join up with the Muntafiq shepherds and move southwards with them, and you have a fairly complete list of the Euphrates Shawiyah lying east of Samawa.

These tribes, though they move about on donkeys, which are more suitable beasts of burden for men owning slowly moving flocks of sheep, are in no way to be confused with the low-class Sukubba fraternity, which are found all over Middle and North Arabia. The latter are the outcasts of the Peninsula, while the shepherd tribes are for the most part of good Arab stock, and some can give and take women from the best tribes of Iraq.

The shepherd tribes are all Shi'ah by persuasion and so are not much liked by the pure-blooded Badawin of the high desert. Nevertheless, they are tolerated and even welcomed by the latter each year, since they bring with them cheap mutton, excellent *dehen* (clarified butter), much wool for tents and red and white sheepskins, always in demand for camel saddle-coverings.

With each annual rainy season the shepherd tribes move south into the gravelly desert some 200 miles or more from the Euphrates. They divide into two waves when they reach the Batin valley, one wave moving down through Kuwait state into the Kuwait Neutral Zone and beyond,* and the other going down as far south as the Tawfi al Dhafir and Tawfi al Mutair, or scattering over the Al Hajara region, which speaking roughly lies along both sides of the Iraq-Sa'udi Arabia frontier line.

Speaking generally, but this is not an invariable rule, the Zaabe-Bani Salema, Ghazzi, Budur, Ghazalat and Zaiyad tribes keep to the west of the Batin while the Shararifat, Juarin, Bani Malik, Albu Salah and 'Azman pass through Kuwait and south along the coast of the Persian Gulf.

The best of the shepherd tribes from a fighting point of view are perhaps the Budur, the Juarin and the Ghazzi, whose Shaikhs Shirshab al Sahan, Nasir al Gubaih (son of the more famous Hussain al Gubaih of Great War days) and Mashhad al Habaiyib I count among some of my oldest friends of the southern desert. I had many a political

* In land terms the southern limit is Jahrah at the head of the Bay of Kuwait.

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Mustafa

Good-looking Shepherd Girls

tussle with them in the old war days when I held charge of the Suq al Shuyukh and Nasriyah areas. All are good fighters and of tough breed, and all carry the very latest type of rifle or carbine with an abundance of ammunition.

The shepherd tribes leave the Euphrates about the 15th October of each year, and provided early rains (*wasm*) have fallen in the southern desert, move slowly south grazing on the new green shoots and drinking from rain pools or *khaluas* which, owing to the rock formation of the subsoil almost everywhere in North-East Arabia, sometimes lie for weeks before drying up.

During February and March the shepherd tribes cover the whole of the area lying to the south and west of Kuwait, and quite one of the pleasantest features of Kuwait life at this time of the year is to meet the large number of pretty shepherd lasses who are to be seen laughing happily and wending their way along the roads which converge on to the town.

These girls are usually accompanied by droves of small donkeys laden to the ground with curdled milk in skins, wool and firewood which they bring into Kuwait to sell, or again in the evening taking home their daily purchases of food, brightly coloured cloth, etc.

They are a very happy community and as a rule prefer to travel without their men folk, who stay with the tents or tend the flocks.

These *khaluas* lasses, as they are locally called, all go unveiled in contrast to the Kuwait Badawin women. Being for the most part pretty and good looking, they usually have a crowd of town youths buzzing round the spot where they congregate to sell their wares. Like most of their sisters nearer home, they can drive the shrewdest of bargains, and give as good as they get in verbal exchanges.

The women with babies either carry them on their backs on the march, or tuck them into a saddle-bag thrown across a donkey's back. The wee faces peering out just above the edge of the roomy bag are a most comical sight.

In general appearance these shepherd girls, like their men folk, are strong and hardy, and rarely ride their donkeys. They walk twelve to fifteen miles a day when visiting Kuwait, and on the same day in the evening return some six or seven miles out of the town, sleep on the side of the road when dark falls, and at dawn continue their

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About half of the Mutair took part in the rebellion against Ibn Sa'ud in 1929-30 under Faisal al Duwish. The other half remained loyal under Ibn Musaiyis, Ibn Shaqair and others. The fortunes of the tribe suffered a temporary eclipse when the rebellion was put down, but it should not be long before it recovers its former strength.

The Mutair are well armed with modern rifles, mostly Turkish and German Mauser carbines with a sprinkling of .303 supplied by Ibn Sa'ud, and though partially disarmed by Ibn Sa'ud after the rebellion of 1929-30 have already largely replaced shortages.

Ammunition to-day appears to be scarce, but this is because it is Ibn Sa'ud's policy to keep his tribes short of this commodity, until there is need for a general issue.

During the Ikhwan movement, the Mutair became the most fanatical and best of Ibn Sa'ud's fighters. With the collapse of the movement they, like the 'Ajman and 'Awazim, have gone back to their old love and would like to come under Kuwait, from whom Ibn Sa'ud managed to entice them away on the death of Mubarak, the great Ruler of Kuwait.

Sullen hostility to Ibn Sa'ud is to-day (1937) marked in spite of the latter's treating the Mutair well. The chief cause of the present hatred dates from the rebellion of 1929-30 and its aftermath, and may be summed up in the following:

(a) The imprisonment of Faisal al Duwish and death of their beloved leader in Riyadh.

(β) The confiscation by Ibn Sa'ud of their almost sacred herd of camels known as the *Sharaf*.

The best-known characteristic of the tribe is the capacity for being able to deliver a surprise attack from a far-distant base. As an individual the Mutairi is manly and brave but inclined to be sullen. He is not good in defence. The tribe breed mainly horses and camels and a few sheep. They own the famous breed of *Krush* horses, and up to the 1929-30 rebellion could probably put six hundred horsemen into the field. The women wear a black hanging veil *burqa* over their faces of attractive appearance, and once satisfied of a guest's credentials will allow him to mix freely with them. This is one of the pleasing traits they are proud of.

The Shammar and Dhafir are the chief enemies of the Mutair. The 'Ajman were formerly hostile, but their recent alliance (1929-30) has healed the breach of the past, at any rate for the time being, and marriages between the two tribes are not uncommon.

'Ajman (Singular 'Ajmi)

Paramount Sheikh—ibn Mutlaq* (from Shaikhly Clan al Mu'ajil, subsection majdal).

* Is also pronounced Shaikhly.

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713 *Arms.*—The tribe is particularly well armed with modern rifles, the majority of the men having the Turkish mauser, while the long .303, short .303, German mauser, and Turkish cavalry mauser are to be found. The British short .303 is not popular, it being considered too clumsy for horsemen to carry.

Ammunition appears to be fairly plentiful, but in wartime would be the first supply to fail. No doubt Ibn Sa'ud would remedy this by a general issue. The 'Ajman look upon the 'Awazim, the other powerful tribe in Hasa, as their hereditary serfs, but Ibn Sa'ud has given the latter the status of an independent tribe. Great enmity exists to-day between the two communities in consequence.

619 The best-known characteristics of the 'Ajman are:

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(*a*) Their hot-headedness in attack, which is liable to get them into difficulties.

(*b*) Their loyalty to each other. "Touch one and touch all" may be called their motto.

(*c*) Their remarkable propensity for chattering. They love a joke.

231 The tribe breeds large numbers of camels and a few horses, but practically no sheep.

342 Their tents are usually black or brown, the *side* pieces and inner partitions having several broad white horizontal stripes in the centre, peculiar to themselves.

291 'Ajman women cover their faces with a shiny cloth mask of rather unattractive appearance as opposed to the black hanging *burqa* of the Murair, 'Awazim and Rashaidah, which looks well.

609 The individuals of the tribe are hospitable to strangers, and the women,

562 like the Murair, will mix freely with guests, once the preliminary suspicious feelings are removed. They very much dislike their women going into the towns, however.

619 The 'Ajman look upon the Dhafir perhaps as their principal enemies, but are also hostile traditionally to Murair, Shammar, Shei, and Sahul tribes.

721 In the 1929–30 Ikhwan rebellion against Ibn Sa'ud about half of the 'Ajman allied themselves with the Murair, half remained staunch.

In the same rebellion the 'Ajman, though camped close to the Kuwait border, carried out several daring and successful long-distance raids to the vicinity of Riyadh and Hufuf, both distant three hundred and fifty miles from their base, proving their well-known talent and capacity for distant forays. In one of these raids the Shaikh of the Al Misra section (Ibn 'Uthain) destroyed fourteen of Ibn Sa'ud's cars in the Dahana between Riyadh and Hufuf.

641 The 'Ajman, with the collapse of the Ikhwan movement, may be said to be sullenly hostile to Ibn Sa'ud, and the northern sections would like to

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GENERAL REMARKS

B 281 The 'Awazim are famous for the fine camels and sheep they breed. They are reported to possess some 100,000 camels and 250,000 sheep.

B 716 The tribe has a good name among Badawin for defensive warfare, but are not considered any good in attack. This is probably because they have no horses, and are confined to a very definite region on the coast. They put up a most magnificent and determined stand against the combined 'Ajman and Mutair attack at Ingair in 1929 ('Ikhwan Rebellion).

B 619 The tribe is not considered a Sharif tribe, and only the Hutaim of West Arabia and the Rashaidah will marry with them.

K 619 641 About two thousand 'Awazim are established in Kuwait town and environs and these are now looked upon as *Hadhar* or townsfolk. They still inter-marry with their nomad relations. They consider the Ruler of Kuwait as their true overlord, but through fear of Bin Sa'ud are forced

B 619 641 to show allegiance to Sa'udi Arabia. They, like the Mutair, were weaned away after Mubarak died. They would undoubtedly throw over their personal allegiance to Bin Sa'ud if safe opportunity offered, as Kuwait is their natural supplying town.

B 619 Characteristics—staunch, uncouth, with rather rough humour, not very hospitable.

Till Bin Sa'ud got control of the 'Awazim they were looked upon as the servants of the more noble 'Ajman. To break the idea and to weaken the latter, Bin Sa'ud honoured the 'Awazim with the title of an independent tribe, and armed them all with modern weapons and distributed much ammunition amongst them. Over 1,500 .303 rifles bought from Great Britain in 1929 were issued to the 'Awazim during the 1929-30 'Ikhwan Rebellion when they remained loyal to the King.

The 'Awazim joined the 'Ikhwan movement out of policy when it was at its heyday, but never really had their heart in it.

B 823 The tribe has a distinct shepherd community "Ahl al Ghanam", whose senior Shaikh is IBN MANA, as opposed to a camel community "Ahl al Bayir" (IBN JAZI), the latter being considered of more consequence.

B 619 718 The tribe's hereditary enemies are the 'Ajman and Mutair (Buraih). The tribe is well armed, most of their weapons being .303 long. They also possess Turkish muskets, with a sprinkling of .303 Martini carbines.

RASHAIDA (Singular RASHIDI)

B 619 *Paramount Shaikh*—IBN MURAILIM.

101 *Present incumbents*—'ABD IBN MURAILIM (Senior) and MUTLIQ IBN MURAILIM.

224 *Strength*—Approximately 1,200 fighting men.

[627] *Habitat*—In winter, the tribe ranges from Safwan in the north of Kuwait

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619 and their men for their knowledge of the country. Hence they make excellent guides and hunters. During the Ikhwan movement half of the tribe left Kuwait and threw in its lot with the Mutair. To-day (1937) they have come back to Kuwait territory to their old allegiance. The tribe is
● 713 well armed with a variety of British and Turkish rifles. A few Martini-Henry carbines also exist among them.

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69 SHAMMAR (singular Shammari)

Divisions.	*Principal Shaikhs.*
(1) ABDA group	Ibn 'Ali
	Ibn Shuraim
	Ibn J...an
	Ibn 'Ajil
(2) ASLAM group	Mishal ibn Twila
(Al Saiyah)	Muhammad al Waja'an
(3) SINJARA group	Ibn Rimli
	Ibn Thunaiyan
(Tumán)	Mishal al Timáki
(Timáki)	Ibn Aiyish
	Mitr'ab al Ruba'a

[641] *Note.*—(*a*) The above owe allegiance to Ibn Sa'ud, King of Sa'udi Arabia. The large and important group of Shammar Jarba, whose habitat is between Baghdad and Mosul (on the left bank of the Euphrates), owes allegiance to Iraq, and so are not included in the above list.

(*b*) Close inter-connection is always maintained, however, between Shammar Jarba and the *Najd* group of Shammar mentioned above. This especially applies to marriage.